

**COVE HARBOR  
AND  
COVE POND  
CONNECTICUT**

**PRELIMINARY  
EXAMINATION**



NEW ENGLAND DIVISION  
CORPS OF ENGINEERS-WAR DEPARTMENT  
BOSTON, MASS. 17 MARCH 1947

407-6103

(NOT FOR PUBLIC RELEASE)

WAR DEPARTMENT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
NEW ENGLAND DIVISION  
BOSTON, MASS.

17 March 1947

Subject: / Preliminary Examination of Cove Harbor and Cove Pond,  
Connecticut,

To: The Chief of Engineers, Washington, D. C.

SYLLABUS

The Division Engineer is of the opinion that no further investigation and report on Cove Harbor and Cove Pond, Connecticut, is warranted, and recommends that no further study be made at this time.

AUTHORITY

1. This report on preliminary examination of Cove Harbor and Cove Pond, Connecticut is submitted in compliance with Departmental direction based on an item in Section 7 of the River and Harbor Act approved 24 July 1946 which reads as follows:

"Cove Harbor and Cove Pond, Connecticut"

DESCRIPTION

2. Cove Harbor is a small tidal inlet situated on the north shore of Long Island Sound in the town of Stamford, about 2 miles east of Stamford Harbor. The harbor is bounded by Caritas Island on the west and Pratt Island at the mouth of the Darien River on the east. Cove Pond is also known as Holly Pond. About two-thirds of Holly Pond is within the limits of the town of Darien and is situated just north of the harbor. Cove Harbor and Holly Pond are separated by a dam of undetermined ownership. The gates of this dam are reported to have been destroyed during the hurricane of 1938. The dam was constructed under authority of the Connecticut State Legislature about 1796. It was used in years past to store water for the generation of power for operation of a grist mill and later by the Stamford Manufacturing Company. This company ceased operations some years ago. Cove Pond has an area of about 150 acres. The depth of water in the Pond was governed by

regulation of the tide gates. The top of the tide gates is reported to have been one foot below mean high water. The Noroton River, a small stream which rises in the northern part of the town, empties into Cove Pond.

3. The approach to the harbor from Long Island Sound has a controlling depth of 7 feet. The harbor proper consists of about 250 acres with depths of 1 to 11 feet. The central portion of about 50 acres has a controlling depth of about 8 feet. On the east side of the harbor a local development company has dredged an area of about 10 acres to depths up to 28 feet. This area has been used by owners of the shore property on Noroton Neck. The harbor is protected on the north and west but is exposed to storms from the south through the southeast. The locality is shown on the charts of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey numbered 221 and 1213 and on Plate 1, (File No. Sd. 659) accompanying this report.

#### TRIBUTARY AREA

4. The area tributary to Cove Harbor and Cove Pond includes the Springdale and Glenbrook sections of the town of Stamford and the Noroton Heights section of the town of Darien. The town and city of Stamford had a population of 61,215 in 1940, a property valuation of \$162,210,473 and a bonded indebtedness of \$2,904,469.60. The population and value of the area adjacent to Cove Harbor and Pond are considerably less. The commercial and recreational needs of the town are well served by Stamford Harbor and Westcott Cove, the latter being about one mile west of Cove Harbor. Darien River, in the town of Darien, is situated about one mile east of Cove Harbor. Cove Mills, at the northern extremity of Cove Harbor, was formerly the site of a large manufacturing concern which transported many tons of waterborne freight annually. This business is no longer active. The area adjacent to the harbor is primarily residential. Pleasure boating is popular during the summer season. There is no existing project.

5. There are no bridges crossing any portion of the waterway. Cove Pond above the dam is navigable only for rowboats and other small craft. There are no railroad connections at Cove Harbor, the nearest stations being at Stamford and Noroton Heights. Ample roadways connect the area with the main highway system of the state.

#### PRIOR REPORTS

6. The only recorded report of the locality was transmitted to Congress December 7, 1912 and printed in House Document 1122, Sixty-second Congress, 3d session. This was a preliminary examination report which considered the advisability of deepening the entrance channel. The Chief of Engineers reported that no improvement was advisable at that time.

#### IMPROVEMENTS BY LOCAL INTERESTS

7. In 1935 a dredging concern received Federal and State permission to dredge a channel 20 feet deep and 250 feet wide through Cove Harbor to the dam at Cove Pond. The dredged material was to be used for commercial purposes. Prior to expiration of the permit in 1944 only a small amount of the dredging had been done and extension of the permit was denied due to objections from property owners, oyster growers, and town officials.

#### TERMINAL AND TRANSFER FACILITIES

8. There are no terminal or transfer facilities on Cove Harbor or Pond. Several private pleasure craft piers have been built along the shores of the harbor, none of which are open to the general public.

#### IMPROVEMENTS DESIRED

9. A public hearing was held at Stamford, Connecticut on 5 December 1946. It was attended by about 25 people including State, city and town officials. The Cove Civic Association, which is composed of residents of the area adjacent to Cove Harbor and Pond, presented the only plan of improvement desired by local interests at this time. The Association, in a formal communication, expressed the belief that

any improvement for navigation was of secondary importance to the residents it represented. It requests the following action:

a. Determination of ownership and responsibility for maintenance of the dam at the entrance to Cove (Holly) Pond.

b. Action by the towns and State to eliminate the pollution of Noroton River, by installation of a sanitary sewer system in the Springdale and Glenbrook sections of the town of Stamford.

c. Dredging Cove (Holly) Pond to an average depth of 4 feet below mean low water between the dam and the Post Road.

d. Improvement of Cove Harbor to permit small boats to enter and leave Cove Pond at all times.

10. The Committee suggested that no dredging improvements should be undertaken until ownership of the dam had been determined and the pollution of Cove Pond eliminated. The dredging in Cove Pond was desired principally to eliminate the polluted flats from in front of the residential area. Dredging in Cove Harbor was stated to be desired in the interest of adjacent property owners and as a general assistance to small boat navigation.

11. One protest was made against any dredging of the harbor by the owner of 112 acres of oyster ground in the harbor.

#### COMMERCE AND VESSEL TRAFFIC

12. The only commerce in the harbor consists of the planting and removal of oyster shells and oysters. There are no records available to indicate the volume of this commerce, but it is believed to be small.

13. The harbor is frequented by a considerable number of small recreational craft owned by local residents but is rarely used by cruising craft, as facilities for such craft are available in nearby Lagoon Pond at Westcott Cove and in Darien River. There are no boat storage and repair yards and no public landings situated on the harbor.

#### DIFFICULTIES ATTENDING NAVIGATION

14. There are no unusual difficulties attending navigation in the harbor. The pond has never been used for general navigation.

## WATER POWER AND OTHER SPECIAL SUBJECTS

15. There are no questions of water power, or shore protection, pertinent to this report. Improvement of the outer harbor might result in minor damage to existing oyster beds but this damage could be minimized by giving adequate notice to the oyster growers to remove their crop.

### DISCUSSION

16. The plan of improvement desired by local interests primarily concerns the elimination of pollution of Cove Pond and the dredging of the pond for the purpose of beautifying the area and making it a more desirable residential section. No great desire has been expressed for the improvement of Cove Harbor for navigational purposes. Existing depths in the harbor appear adequate for the small recreational craft now using it. Some dredging work near shore and accompanying construction of public shore facilities might stimulate use of the harbor. Local interests have expressed no great desire for such improvements.

17. The local government has a pollution problem but this does not have any appreciable adverse effect on navigation. The purpose of the requested dredging appears, for the most part, to be a means of improving the adjacent areas for the benefit of the residential section.

### CONCLUSION

18. The Division Engineer is of the opinion that the need or general desire for navigation improvements at Cove Harbor and Cove Pond does not warrant further study of the locality at this time.

### RECOMMENDATION

19. In view of the above, the Division Engineer recommends that no survey of the locality be made at this time.

R. G. MOSES  
Brigadier General, U.S.A.  
Division Engineer

1 Inclosure:  
#1 - Plate 1 (File No. Sd 659)

